

RSN/SsN Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Version 6.0 – 10 June 2005

How can I contact DARPA with other questions?

Please send your questions via email to the special BAA email addresses set up by DARPA. For RSN, send your question to BAA05-32@darpa.mil. For SsN, send your question to BAA05-33@darpa.mil. These mailboxes are usually checked once daily.

1) RSN/SSN: Is the list of attendees at the RSN/SsN Proposer's Day Briefing (PDB) available?

Yes, The list of attendees is posted on the SPO solicitation website, <http://www.darpa.mil/spo/solicitations.htm>

2) RSN/SSN: How do I receive the classified addenda and the classified slides from the PDB?

Instructions for receiving the addenda are in section 6.2 of the PIP. The slides may be requested via the same channel as the addenda.

3) RSN/SSN: The PDB and/or PIP did not specify XXX as being a "Signal Of Opportunity". Is it okay to use that as a signal?

Yes. We did not try to exhaustively list all the signals that could be exploited. The PDB and PIP outline an example "baseline" solution that DARPA feels will meet the criteria detailed in the classified addenda to the PIP's. However, because this is a BAA, not an RFP, proposers are encouraged to think "outside of the box" and propose solutions that are better and different than DARPA's envisioned solution, as well as use specific signals in the context of the DARPA example. If a solution uses a signal (electromagnetic or otherwise) that already exists for any other reason, that signal is classified as a Signal of Opportunity and may be used.

4) RSN/SSN: Is authentication of sources, and security a problem than needs to be addressed seriously in the proposals?

At this point in time, DARPA is primarily concerned about the performance of systems exploiting signals that have not been manipulated. For Phase 1 and 2, authentication and security are not critical. However, the proposers should realize that this may very well become a user requirement, and therefore should anticipate and allow room for this requirement should this transition to a service user after Phase 2. If you feel that authentication and security are very key issues that should be dealt with in detail in Phase 1 and 2, please explain your reasoning. Please note that it is likely that this discussion should be classified, as it bears on potential vulnerabilities of the concept.

5) RSN/SSN: What project funding is anticipated for RSN and/or SsN?

DARPA is not giving a funding estimate for either program. Proposals should address the technical issues and solutions, then price the solutions as accurately as possible. DARPA wants to know how much it will cost you to validate your concepts and design and develop the capabilities.

6) RSN/SSN: Is a ROM acceptable for Phase 2 funding?

No. Phase 2 should be priced as though the proposer's Phase 1 Concept survives Phase 1 unchanged and is to be built in Phase 2. DARPA recognizes that there will be changes along the way, and performers will provide an updated cost proposal at the end of their Phase 1 effort (see Phase 1 Deliverable #5).

7) RSN/SSN: Can an organization without a site security clearance be a prime?

It will be very difficult for an uncleared entity to respond to the BAA as a prime, since cognizance of the classified goals is needed. There is no problem for the uncleared entity responding as a subcontractor to a cleared prime. In fact, this is encouraged since many research foundations and universities that may have great ideas do not have facility or personnel clearances. All classified work would have to be performed at the prime's facilities, although much of the algorithm and technology development could probably be performed in an unclassified (e.g. the subcontractor's) space.

8) RSN/SSN: We plan on refreshing old clearances for some of our personnel. Those were held by a variety of sponsors, mostly private enterprises. Could DARPA hold those clearances directly?

No. DARPA cannot hold your employee's clearances. The only way that DARPA could hold the clearances would be for a direct purchase order to an individual, which this award will not be.

9) RSN/SSN: If we submit a classified proposal and the only classified information that we include in our submission is contained in the classified addendum of this PIP, which OCA classification guides, if any, need to be submitted? And when are these due?

If the only classified information contained in the proposal is that information from the classified addenda and the classified Proposer's Day Briefing materials that DARPA has made available to proposers, then DARPA is the Original Classification Authority (OCA) and no additional classification guides need to be submitted with the proposal. For documentation purposes, proposers should cite the DARPA New Start Classification Guide, DARPA-CG-201.

Classification guides for past work sponsored by other agencies are due at the same time as the proposal is submitted.

10) RSN/SSN: Is there a particular location that we should assume for any measurements in Phase 1 and prototype testing in Phase 2?

No. You are free to propose Phase 1 testing at any location that simulates/recreates the environments of interest, as outlined in the PDB and PIP. DARPA has identified some CONUS sites of interest for Demo testing in Phase 2, but those cannot be released at this time. These may be of interest to performers in Phase 1, and will be discussed at the Kickoff Meetings.

11) RSN: Is it a higher priority for a system to support ground troops verses an airborne system, or are they of equal importance? Also, since Phase 1 is concept development, what importance will be placed on the technology transition plan?

The physics challenge problem is for ground support in tough environments (not just standing on ground). Any solution must be able to handle that, too. The tech challenge is to support these

ground users/environments with a system concept that is effectively extensible to the airborne problem- that is, for the solution to be as flexible and universal as possible.

The tech transition story is coupled with the tech challenge- can we combat/harness the needed physics with something that is flexible, extensible, and affordable, and thus transitionable? In Phase 1 we are looking more for characteristics of the concept that will make it transitionable, than for a specific transition story.

12) RSN/SSN: Would a response that does not provide solutions for all scenarios be considered responsive, or must an offeror provide a solution for all scenarios to be considered responsive?

A solution that does not address all major areas of interest would be considered responsive to the BAA, but may not be competitive against other solutions that do address all areas of interest.

13) SSN: The PIP states in paragraph 2.2, DARPA's Vision and Goals for the SSN Program:

"It is recognized that these can have benefits in difficult signal propagation environments, but inertial or flow methods are not sufficient solutions in themselves for this program, which desires a system with no error growth with time or distance."

Is this to be interpreted to mean that optical flow techniques would not be considered responsive to the BAA?

DARPA does not currently consider that optical flow techniques alone are a sufficient solution because they are likely to provide error growth with time. However, they may be extremely valuable, and provide a large and essential part of the solution if combined with some amount of direct position observation from "external" signals, even very noisy ones, if the optical flow performs very well. Due to the very open nature of the BAA, (as opposed to an RFP which dictates the solution, as well as the goal), an offeror is welcome to submit a proposal that is contrary to DARPA's current understanding. Such proposals must include sufficient evidence to convince DARPA that what is proposed meets our goals.

14) RSN/SSN: Will electronic submission of the proposal be allowed?

Electronic submissions are not being accepted via classified nor unclassified channels. Proposals may either be mailed or hand-delivered to DARPA. Both PIP's are very specific in their instructions for submittal of proposals at all levels of classifications.